

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of determining an identity of at least each card in card hands at a casino table card game comprising:

automatically reading the rank and suit of each card that leaves a dealing shoe;
dealing hands according to rules of play of the casino table card game with at least one hand comprising at least one card being dealt to a player;

defining an edge of the at least one hand by the read rank and suit of the at least one card dealt to the player;

dealing additional cards to the hands according to the rules of the casino table card game;

providing a signal of at least one of a completion of a hand, a completion of initial hands or completion of first cards having been dealt to all players present at the table by manual activation of a signal by a dealer or automatic signaling resulting from sensing of a card at a signal position;

removing exhausted hands from the table and placing the exhausted hands in a discard rack;

reading each card placed in the discard rack from the exhausted hands to determine rank and suit of each card placed in the discard rack; and

reconciling the cards placed in the discard rack with the cards that left the dealing shoe.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 1 wherein in addition to the at least one hand being dealt to the player, a hand is dealt to ~~[[a]]~~ the dealer or to a common card area, and automatic signaling results from sensing of a card at a signal position comprising the common card area or a position where dealer's cards are placed.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 2 wherein the first card, an initial ~~[[card]]~~ hand or the complete hand is dealt to the dealer and the signal of the completion of hands comprises signaling that a first card, the initial hand or complete hand has been provided to the dealer.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 2 wherein there are multiple players and each of the multiple players receives an at least one card, and the signal is provided when a) a first dealer card, the initial hand or dealer's complete hand is received or b) at least a common card is received in the common card area.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 4 wherein the signal is provided that the first dealer's card or the dealer's initial hand has been provided to the dealer.

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 1 wherein a number of active player positions is determined by a count of a number of cards that leave the dealing shoe before a first dealer card, dealer initial hand, a first common card or complete set of common cards is signaled.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 4 wherein a number of active player positions is determined by a count of a number of cards that leave the dealing shoe before the first dealer card or first common card is signaled, and edges of each player hand are defined by the read rank and suit of the at least one card received by the player.

8. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 5 wherein a number of active player positions is determined by a count of a number of cards that leave the dealing shoe before the first dealer card or first common card is signaled.

9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 4 wherein complete hands of a specific number of cards are sequentially dealt to players and a determined number of active player positions is determined by a count of an initial number of cards dealt divided by the initial number of cards per hand before the signal of the presence of at least one card in the dealers hand or common cards is made.

10. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 5 wherein complete hands of a specific number of cards are sequentially dealt to players and a number of active player positions is determined by a count of the number of cards dealt divided by the number of cards

before the signal of the presence of at least one card in the dealers hand or the common card(s) is made.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 6 wherein the casino table card game is blackjack and cards are dealt to each player position and a dealer position one at a time.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 4 wherein the casino table card game is blackjack and cards are dealt to each player position and a dealer position one at a time.

13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 5 wherein the casino table card game is blackjack and cards are dealt to each player position and a dealer position one at a time.

14. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 9 wherein the casino table card game is blackjack and cards are dealt to each player position and a dealer position one at a time.

15. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 4 wherein a signal of the presence of a dealer's initial hand is used to determine a number of active player positions.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 11 wherein a signal of the presence of a dealer's initial hand is used to determine a number of active player positions.

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 12 wherein a signal of the presence of a dealer's initial hand is used to determine a number of active player positions.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 6 wherein all active player positions are determined and after determination of all active player positions, initial hands for each player position are determined as known hands.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 11 wherein all active player positions are determined and after determination of all active player positions, initial hands for each player position are determined as known hands.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 1 wherein exhausted hands placed in the discard rack are reconciled with hands that have automatically had their rank and suit read as each card left the dealing shoe; and then were dealt as hands according to the rules of play and based at least on knowledge of a set of first two cards received in a hand placed in the discard rack.

21. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 11 wherein exhausted hands placed in the discard rack are reconciled with hands that have automatically had their rank and suit read as each card left the dealing shoe; and then were dealt as hands according to the rules of play and based at least on knowledge of a set of first two cards received in a hand placed in the discard rack.

22. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 12 wherein exhausted hands placed in the discard rack are reconciled with hands that have automatically had their rank and suit read as each card left the dealing shoe; and then were dealt as hands according to the rules of play and based at least on knowledge of a set of first two cards received in a hand placed in the discard rack.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 13 wherein exhausted hands placed in the discard rack are reconciled with known hands, the known hands based at least on knowledge of a set of first two cards wherein each card of the at least two cards has left a dealing shoe and was automatically read for its rank and suit and then was received in a hand that became an exhausted hand and the exhausted hand was placed in the discard rack.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A system for determination of at least individual hands of cards in a casino table card game comprising:

a card delivery device that reads the rank and suit of first cards delivered to a player hand position and/or a dealer hand position, and sends first signals of the suit and rank of each card to a processor,

the processor identifying the rank and suit of the first cards delivered to a player hand position as an edge of a hand;

the card delivery device in combination with a card sensor automatically providing a signal to the processor that dealing of a partial hand has been completed;

a card discard tray that reads the rank and suit of each card delivered to the card discard tray, and sends second signals of the suit and rank of each card in the card discard tray to the processor, and

the processor receiving the signals from the delivery device and the discard tray and identifying the at least individual hands that were played in the casino table card game based on comparison of the first and second signals.

25. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 24 communicatively associated with a blackjack card table.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 25 wherein a signaling element is communicatively associated with the system to automatically indicate at least one of when a dealer has received a first card or a dealer has received two cards, or a dealer has received all cards in a dealer hand.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 24 wherein a signaling element is communicatively associated with the system to indicate at least one of when a dealer has received a first card or a dealer has received two cards and wherein the signaling element comprises a manually activated element.

28. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 26 wherein the signaling element comprises a sensor sensing ~~[[dealer]]~~ a dealer's card or dealer's cards eard(s).

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 24 wherein hands delivered to every player position are identified by an anchor reference comprising ~~[[the]]~~ identity of two cards first received at ~~[[the]]~~ each player position.

30. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 25 wherein hands of each player position are identified by an anchor reference comprising the identity of two cards first received at the player position.

31. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 26 wherein hands of each player position are identified by an anchor reference comprising the identity of two cards first received at the player position.

32. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 24 wherein completion of dealing cards to players and a possibility of providing additional cards to a dealer is identified by a dealer's signal.

33. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 32 wherein the dealer's signal is provided by clearing a view from a sensor.

34. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 32 wherein the dealer's signal is provided by manual activation of a dealer's signaling element.

35. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 4 wherein a first number of complete hands of a specific number of cards are sequentially dealt to players and a determined number of active player positions is determined by a count of a second number of cards dealt divided by an actual number of cards dealt before the signal of the presence of at least one card in the dealers hand or the common cards is made.

36. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 1 wherein exhausted hands placed in the discard rack are reconciled with hands that have automatically had their rank and suit read as each card left the dealing shoe; and then were dealt as hands according to the rules of play and based at least on knowledge of a set of first two cards received in a hand placed in the discard rack.

37. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 11 wherein exhausted hands placed in the discard rack are reconciled with hands that have automatically had their rank and suit read as each card left the dealing shoe; and then were dealt as hands

according to the rules of play and based at least on knowledge of a set of first two cards received in a hand placed in the discard rack.

SUMMARY OF THE OFFICE ACTION**1. CLAIM OBJECTIONS**

a) Claims 2 and 24 have been objected to because of perceived lack of antecedent basis in the use of "a" where "the" should be used, in both claims.

2. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claims 23 and 28-33 have been rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. A list of 5 asserted issues is given.

3. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 1-23 and 35-37 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over McCrea Jr. (US Patent No. 5,605,334) in view of Meissener et al. (US 5,779,546), Mothwurf (US 5,919,090) and Soltys (Published US Application 2003/017737).

Claims 24-26 and 28-33 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over McCrea Jr. (US Patent No. 5,605,334) in view of Mothwurf (US 5,919,090).